

Fees and Expenses Policy

Document status

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| Abstract | This document outlines LGBCE's approach to claiming and paying fees and expenses to staff and Commissioners |
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| Revision Frequency | Every two years (Commissioners' fee rates to be reviewed annually in line with the recommendations of the Senior Salaries Review Body for judges). |
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| Contributors | |
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| Equalities Screening | No further impacts have been identified since the last review of the policy. |

Document revision

| Version | Date | Revised by | Purpose of issue | Summary of changes |
|---------|----------|----------------|--|---|
| V9.0 | 19/12/18 | Karen Cleverly | Previous approved version | |
| V9.1 | 17/09/19 | Karen Cleverly | Update fee rates | Updated fee rates to 2019/20 levels. |
| V9.2 | 21/11/19 | Karen Cleverly | For Leadership Team approval | Added cut-off point for claiming fees/expenses, as per internal audit rec. |
| V9.3 | 14/09/20 | Karen Cleverly | Two-year update for ARC | Updated fee levels. Incorporated additional guidance issued to Commissioners on 04/05/20. Removed reimbursement of additional insurance premium |
| V9.4 | 21/10/20 | Karen Cleverly | For Commission approval | Added ARC comments: added paragraph on employment status of Commissioners |
| V.10 | 19/11/20 | Karen Cleverly | Final version for circulation. | Note added to 'Revision Frequency' re virtual working arrangements. |
| V10.1 | 14/01/20 | Karen Cleverly | Minor update requested by the Chair, update job title and write abbreviation (CE) in full. | Rewording of "Claiming Fees and Expenses" section. Updating job title for Director of Corporate Services. Writing CE in full. |
| V10.2 | 25/01/22 | Lynn Ingram | Include details of new Fee Claim Scheme | Revision of "Claiming Fees and Expenses" section, include details of home equipment scheme |
| V11.0 | 28/09/22 | Lynn Ingram | Final version for circulation | |
| V11.1 | 04/11/22 | Rafa Chowdhury | Update fee rates | Updated fee rates to 2022/23 levels |

| Version | Date | Revised by | Purpose of issue | Summary of changes |
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| V11.2 | 18/08/23 | Kathryn Trower | Update accommodation rates | Updated accommodation rates following discussion at Commission meeting 15/08/23 |
| V11.3 | 13/10/23 | Kathryn Trower | Updated the list of railcards | Replaced the young person's railcard with the 16-25 & 26-30 railcards |

Document distribution / approval

| Name | Purpose |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Director of Corporate Services | For comment |
| Leadership Team | For comment |
| ARC | For comment |
| Commission | For comment & approval |
| All staff & commissioners | For information. |

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COMMISSIONERS' FEES:

Commissioners' fees were set by HM Treasury when LGBCE was established and mirrored the rate, and the arrangements, of those in the Electoral Commission. The fee level is reviewed on 1 April each year and any increases reflect percentage increase paid to High Court Judges as part of the Senior Salaries Review Body's work.

The role of Commissioner is a statutory appointment and as such, Commissioners are regarded as office holders (not employees or self-employed).

Commissioners should be mindful of the test of public scrutiny and should where possible (and considering the policies of other organisations) share expenses and travel time across organisations if it is appropriate and reasonable to do so. If a Commissioner claims a full day of fees, it is not expected that they will undertake work for other organisations during that day.

Commissioners are paid either at a daily rate or a half daily rate and include travel time to and from meetings. Commissioners cannot charge for more than one fee day per day and there is an assumption that a fee day equals 8 hours.

Current rates (from 1st April 2022) are:

- Chair: daily fee of £414 (£207 per half day).
- Deputy Chair: daily fee of £364 (£182 per half day) unless formally deputising for the Chair, in which case the Chair's fee rate applies.
- Other members: daily fee of £364 (£182 per half day).

The structure in which Commissioners can claim fees was reviewed w.e.f. 01/10/21 to account for the different ways in which Commissioners had begun to work during the pandemic.

From 1st October 2021 Commissioners can claim for the following:

Admin Allowances

- Review allocations and brief discussions on reviews
- Reading and responding to emails
- Short conversations with staff/LT/fellow commissioners/Chief Exec/Chair
- General reading (not board papers)

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Chair | - 2 days per month |
| Deputy Chair | - 1 day per month |
| Commissioner | - 1/3 day per month |
| ARC Chair | - ½ day 4 times a year (month of ARC meeting) |

Review Matrix

Preliminary Meeting and prep (2 hours) Chair Only

Preliminary Period (3 hours)- This includes meeting preparation, Group Leaders meeting and Full Council meeting

Parish Meetings (2 hours) This is separated from the Preliminary Period as only some Commissioners do these

Council Size (1.5 hours) This is liaison and discussions over the Council Size report
Draft Recommendations (2 hours) This includes report preparation and consultation involvement
Draft Recommendations Virtual Tour (2 hours)
Draft Recommendations Actual Tour (max of one fee day in any 24-hour period)
Final Recommendations (2 hours) This includes report preparation

In addition, Commissioners may claim for

- *Preparation* – reading Commission Papers and related materials in preparation for Commission meetings or other formal meetings (such as strategy and policy workshops or ARC). The claim will normally be equivalent to half a day and will be advised by the Chief Executive
- *Meetings* – attending (including time travelling to and from) Commission or sub-committee meetings. Where the total time taken (including travel) is under 4 hours, the half day rate applies; for those taking over 4 hours, the full day rate applies.

Other

- Meetings such as annual appraisals, attendance at officer meetings (i.e. EDI) should be claimed according to the time spent.
- Emails/ short conversations, reading (apart from formal meeting prep) and commission administration (i.e., filling out claim forms) should form part of the administration allowance for each role.
- Actual tours if made should be claimed according to the time spent

Commissioners should make their claim using the annual claim form supplied and forward to the Business Team (normally the 10th of the following month) for payroll input.

Commissioners should seek prior authorisation from either the Chief Executive (CE) or the Director of Corporate Services for any other time chargeable on Commission business. If a Commissioner wishes to claim more than the expected tariff for instance in the case of a complicated review, then they should obtain authorisation from the CE.

TRAVEL:

Travel arrangements are made by members of staff using Government procurement cards (held by Review Managers and some other managers). Commissioners also arrange their own travel for journeys to and from the Commission's offices and areas under review for which they are the lead Commissioner. In these circumstances,

Commissioners would normally pay the up-front cost of their travel and then submit an expense claim for reimbursement.

As a general rule, Commissioners and officers should ensure that travel costs incurred are reasonable and that the most cost-effective means of travel for the journey is taken.

Travelling by Train and Tube:

Standard class tickets should be purchased for all journeys unless:

- a first/business class ticket is cheaper
- there is no standard class ticket available
- the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services determines that for business reasons first class travel is appropriate
- there is a health & safety reason to travel first/business class (i.e. due to disability).

Appropriate evidence for the decision to travel first class in any of these circumstances should be attached to expense claims.

Commissioners and officers are asked to purchase train tickets as far in advance as possible to ensure the best price.

Commissioners and officers have the option to upgrade to first class and to pay the difference themselves between the standard class and first-class fares. Where possible, evidence (e.g. screenshots) should be provided of the different fares.

The Commission will reimburse staff and Commissioners for the cost of the following one-year railcards when purchased, during their employment with the organisation, to achieve discounted prices for tickets bought for Commission business.

- 16-25 Railcard
- 26-30 Railcard
- Senior Railcard

For Oyster and contactless payments, we recommend that an account is created so that the journey and payment history can be accessed (however, we do not require receipts for these journeys where less than £5).

Travelling by Car:

Private Cars:

It may be appropriate to travel by car if there are no other suitable means of transport, it is cheaper than other means of transport (e.g. where several people are travelling together), there is a substantial saving in travelling time, the journey cannot be made using public transport, heavy luggage or equipment is being carried, it is in the interests of safety.

Commissioners and officers may use their own cars for travel on Commission business **only** if they hold a valid full driving licence for the UK **and** their car insurance

policy covers business use. Commissioners and staff must provide to the Business Team an up-to-date copy of their insurance certificate showing this **before** they can use their own cars for Commission business and must inform the Commission if the insurer stops covering for business use.

Providing these requirements are met, Commissioners and officers can claim an allowance per mile for journeys using their vehicles on Commission business (See Appendix B) providing they keep a record of the miles driven on each journey.

The allowance per mile is reduced for every mile driven above 10,000 miles in a financial year. For tax reasons, Commissioners must record the cumulative miles claimed for in a financial year. A fact sheet is available from the HMRC website at: <https://www.gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees/vehicles-you-use-for-work>

Commissioners and officers can claim costs for parking, tolls, etc. when supported by receipts.

Hire Cars:

When it is necessary to use a hire car the booking should be carried out by Commission staff using the car hire account.

Cars hired will be from compact groups, i.e. Ford Focus or similar. Larger cars are more expensive and will only be hired in exceptional circumstances.

Commissioners and officers may not use cars hired on Commission business for personal use.

Fuel costs for hired cars will be paid providing the claim is supported by a receipt.

Travelling by Air:

Air travel should only be used when it is the most economical and practical method of travel. Whenever possible, flights should be booked well in advance to benefit from any discounted rates.

When travelling by air on Commission business, economy class should be used. The Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services can exceptionally determine that business class travel is appropriate when the flight is outside the UK and lasts for more than 4 hours, or it is cheaper to use a higher class. Appropriate evidence for the decision to travel in a higher class and the authorisation should be attached to expense claims.

Prior approval must be sought from the CE before expenditure is incurred on all travel outside the UK on Commission business.

Travelling by Taxi:

The Commission will reimburse the cost of taxi fares where:

- There are no other suitable modes of transport.

- It is cheaper to use a taxi (e.g. where several people are travelling together)
- It is not possible to make the journey on time using public transport.
- It is not possible or impractical to use public transport (e.g. due to mobility issues).
- Heavy luggage or equipment is being carried.
- You are required to travel at times when public transport may not be practical, or you may not feel safe (e.g. very early or late). In these cases, judgement should be used as to whether staying overnight before or after may be a better and/or more cost-effective option.

A receipt must be provided for any taxi journey taken. Gratuities, where appropriate, and providing the amount is reasonable and commensurate with the costs of the journey, may be claimed. The cost should be included in the receipt total.

Travelling by Motorcycle or Bicycle:

Commissioners and officers may claim an allowance to use their own motorcycle or bicycle for journeys on Commission business. (See Appendix A).

Other Expenses Incurred:

The Commission will reimburse the cost of meals taken while on Commission business provided that:

- A total of more than 5 hours is spent away on Commission business.
- It would not be reasonable for a Commissioner or officer to return home or to their normal place of work for a meal.
- Costs of no more than three meals in any 24-hour period are claimed.
- Claims are supported by itemised receipts for the cost of any meals. This can include hot or cold drinks, but not the cost of alcoholic drinks.

Allowable limits for meals are set out in Appendix A. They are intended to represent the maximum that would be incurred for a normal meal across the UK wide geographical area – they are not intended to be the limit up to which Commissioners or officers must spend but the upper limit that must not be breached.

ALCOHOL:

The Commission will not reimburse any expenses incurred on the purchase of alcohol.

PERSONAL LOSSES/FINES:

The Commission does not accept responsibility for personal losses while travelling on Commission business and will not reimburse the costs of penalties incurred (e.g. fines for not holding a valid ticket for the journey, driving or parking fines).

WORKING FROM HOME:

Equipment and furniture:

The Commission will pay for the cost of certain equipment and furniture suitable for staff working from home. These items can either be purchased by claiming the cost back through expenses via Aqilla or by using a Government Procurement Card (GPC).

Items eligible for purchase and their agreed spending limits are as follows:

| Item | Pre-approved maximum price¹ |
|----------------------|---|
| Chair | £180 |
| Desk | £100 |
| Height-adjusted desk | £150 |
| Floor Mat | £35 |
| Monitor | N/A (Business Team will order) |
| Keyboard & Mouse | N/A (Business Team will order) |
| Laptop stand | £40 (claim through expenses) |
| Headphones | £60 (claim through expenses) |

You can find more information about this from the 'Purchasing equipment and furniture for home working' guidance document accessible from the 'Working from Home' SharePoint page.

If you need to purchase other sundries such as stamps or paper, you will need to purchase those items yourself and claim the expense through Aqilla. Receipts must be retained and uploaded to Aqilla as part of the normal process for claiming expenses. If the item is partly for your own use (e.g. printer ink), you should pro-rata the claim, accordingly, adding details of your calculation to Aqilla via the 'notes' icon.

Commissioners are not eligible to claim for the cost of furniture or other sundries while working from home.

OTHER EXPENSES:

Staying away from home overnight:

The Commission will pay the costs of commercial overnight accommodation with private facilities for a double room in a standard/medium quality hotel.

A flat rate allowance of £5.00 per night to cover incidental costs such as the cost of phone calls home, newspapers, etc. may be claimed without submitting receipts. Alternatively, the actual, receipted costs - up to £5 - for these items may be claimed (but not both).

Where a Commissioner or officer is accompanied by their partner during a visit, any additional cost arising from the presence of the partner must either be excluded from the claim or reimbursed within one month of the date of travel.

¹ This includes delivery

Accommodation bookings should be made by Commission staff whenever possible. If, exceptionally, it has not been possible to book accommodation in advance, Commissioners and officers should aim to stay in a standard/medium quality hotel within the limits set out in Appendix A*.

Commission staff will offer a choice of hotels that fall within the limits set out in Appendix A*. If a Commissioner/officer chooses to stay in a hotel that is above the limits set out in Appendix A, they may either:

- make the booking themselves and reclaim the cost through an expense claim (up to the limits set out in Appendix A), or
- ask Commission staff to make the booking on their behalf and then pay the difference into LGBCE's bank account.

*Occasionally it may not be possible to find suitable accommodation within the limits set out in Appendix A within reasonable travelling distance/time. The Chief Executive has discretion to approve a higher rate in these circumstances. Approval must be sought in advance of booking.

Staying overnight with friends and relatives or at a second home:

A Commissioner or officer may claim up to £25.00 for actual, receipted expenditure when staying overnight with friends and relatives in circumstances where they are away from their permanent home on official duty. The same applies when (in the same circumstances) they are able to stay in accommodation owned by them, but which is not their prime residence, e.g. a second home. HMRC no longer allows a flat rate allowance.

Meals while away from home:

The Commission will reimburse the cost of meals when staying away from home overnight on Commission business. If meals are not included in the price of overnight accommodation, Commissioners and officers should obtain a receipt for the cost of any meal claimed for. Cost of meals will be reimbursed up to the amount set out in Appendix A.

Other overnight expenses:

The Commission will reimburse the cost of making business phone calls and connecting to the internet where this is required for business reasons. Claims must be supported by evidence of the expenditure incurred.

Travelling Overseas:

All overseas travel and expenses must be pre-authorised by the Chief Executive.

The Commission will reimburse costs such as vaccinations travel/medical insurance, visas, etc. where necessary before travelling overseas on Commission business (the Commission does not take out commercial travel insurance). Overseas accommodation should normally be booked by members of Commission staff. Claims for any other expenditure relating to the trip must be supported by receipts.

Childcare and other caring responsibilities:

The Commission may reimburse the cost of care for children or other dependants while a Commissioner or officer is away from home on Commission business. This will only be considered when the care is not normally in place for that period and is in addition to the normal contracted hours of the carer.

All expenses for care of dependants must be pre-authorized by the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services and claims must be supported by receipts.

CLAIMING FEES AND EXPENSES:

All claims should be submitted using the annual Commission fee claim, including scans or photos of receipts to support claims which will be uploaded to the finance system by the Business Support Team. Advice is available from the Business.

For reasons of transparency and audit, it is important that Commissioners record (in an electronic or paper diary) all work undertaken for LGBCE that leads to a fee claim. This evidence should be retained for at least three years.

To assist with budget planning and control, it is important that staff and Commissioners claim fees and expenses in a timely manner. It is especially important that all claims are submitted in order for them to be included in the relevant year-end accounts.

Wherever possible, fees/expenses should be claimed immediately after the month end to which they relate - the cut-off date for claims is the tenth of the following month for payment at the end of that month – and no later than the subsequent month. Where this is not possible, then this should be discussed with the Chief Executive or Director of Corporate Services, explaining the reason for the delay.

The Chief Executive and Director of Corporate Services authorise each other's expenses and those of the Chair and other Commissioners (but not their own). Staff claims are authorised by a relevant manager. The Aquilla system enables claimants to check the status of their claim, and their claim history.

Details of Commissioners' and Directors' claims are collated and published quarterly on the LGBCE website.

APPENDIX A: RATES

Limits on expenses reimbursement: Reimbursement will be made for actual expenditure, supported by receipts, up to the limit² of:

| Accommodation | London | Elsewhere |
|---|---------------|------------------------|
| Hotel, etc - room only | £180.00 | £130.00 |
| Hotel, etc - Bed & Breakfast | £190.00 | £140.00 |
| Meals | | |
| Breakfast | | £10.00 |
| Lunch | | £15.00 |
| Dinner | | £30.00 |
| Meals eaten at normal place of work outside core working hours | | £5.00 |
| Overnight incidental costs allowance (receipts not needed for £5 flat rate). | | £5.00 |
| Overnight stay with friends/relatives or in a second home (this must be receipted). | | £25.00 ³ |
| Your own car (with valid business use insurance) | | |
| First 10,000 business miles in a financial year: | | 45p per mile |
| Each mile over 10,000 business miles in a financial year: | | 25p per mile |
| Passengers (all business mileage) | | 5p per person per mile |
| Motorcycles | | |
| Pence per mile | | 24p |
| Bicycles | | |
| Pence per mile | | 20p |

² Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs may be higher for people with disabilities (e.g. accessible room, special diets, costs for guide dogs). In these cases, higher limits may be allowed. They must be evidenced and should normally be pre-authorized by the Director of Corporate Services or Chief Executive. The Chief Executive also has discretion to approve a higher rate if suitable accommodation is not available within the limits.

³ The flat rate allowance is no longer allowed by HMRC so only actual, receipted costs can be claimed.